

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY  
"RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY" (RMC)  
Monday, December 15, 2003**

**Call to Order:** 1:11 PM - Rosemead Community Center, Garvey Rm., 9108 Garvey Avenue, Rosemead, CA 91770.

**1. ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:** Mr. Dan Arrighi, Ms. Heather Barnett (for Mr. Chrisman), Ms. Margaret Clark, Chair Frank Colonna, Ms. Cristina Madrid, Vice Chair Bev Perry, Mr. Rick Ruiz, Ms. Debbie Smith (for Mr. Tamminen), Ms. Jody Cook (for Mr. Blackwell), Ms. Marilyn Cundiff (for Mr. Wright), Mr. Brian Sasaki (for Mr. Noyes), Mr. Stan Chen (for Mr. Stetson), and Mr. Larry B. McKenney (for Ms. Wilson).

**Members Absent:** Mr. David De Jesus, Mr. Fred Klass (for Ms. Arduin), Supervisor Gloria Molina, Mr. Edward Wilson, Dr. Paul Yost, Mr. Ron Schafer (for Ms. Coleman), and Mr. Dan Young (for Colonel Thompson).

**Staff Present:** Belinda Faustinos, Executive Officer  
Enrique Arroyo, Deputy Executive Officer  
Terry Fujimoto, Deputy Attorney General  
Valerie Thompson, Board Secretary

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Jerry Schubel, President of the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, thanked Chair Colonna for his support to the Sustainable Coastal Community project. Mr. Schubel gave the Board members a "Building Long Beach for 2005" compact disc. The contents of the compact disc were the result of 39 ten and eleven year old Long Beach students who developed what they thought Long Beach should look like in the year 2025. He noted that a physical model was presented to Mayor Beverly O'Neal, the Mayor of 2003.

Mr. Schubel stated that he was very pleased to be on the agenda to be considered for an award for a planning grant for creating an exhibit and collateral programs that would allow people to explore the changing relationships of people in the area that are defined by San Pedro Bay, ports, watersheds and the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers.

Mr. Jeff Yann, Founder and Board Member of Amigos de los Rios addressed the Board. He stated that Amigos de los Rios was initiated by the Sierra Club to do community outreach regarding the Rivers and announced that it has now incorporated as an independent 501(c)(3) organization. He stated that Claire Robinson, former Director of NorthEast Trees, was hired as the Executive Director for Amigos de Los Rios. He discussed project implementation and how the organization was focusing on the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel Rivers. He also discussed their community outreach involvement with the City of El Monte. He stated that they were hearing from schools and parents in the community who wanted parks. He thanked the Board and he stated that he looked forward to working with the Conservancy.

Terry Fujimoto, Deputy Attorney General, administered the Oath of Office to new member Larry B. McKenney, Executive Manager, Orange County Public Facilities and Resources Department.

Chair Colonna introduced and welcomed Larry McKenney.

#### **4. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 20, 2003 MEETING MINUTES**

Ms. Clark noted minor corrections.

**Ms. Clark motioned to approve the Minutes as amended, Ms. Madrid seconded the motion. Unanimously passed.**

#### **5. CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chair Colonna had no report to give.

#### **6. DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL'S REPORT**

Mr. Fujimoto had no report to give.

#### **7. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

##### **A. Budget and Expenditure Report**

Ms. Belinda Faustinos asked the Board to refer to page 17 of the Board package for several reports. She indicated that the first page was a report on the Conservancy's support budget. She reported that there is a Governor's Order in effect that places a freeze on all travel, contracts and equipment orders. She further noted that the Conservancy has an equipment encumbrance that was entered prior to the date the freeze was issued.

She noted that all of the Conservancy's grant funding had been encumbered to date. She explained that the Conservancy made a few adjustments in November to the workprogram implementation grant, based on the grants that the Board approved.

##### **B. Legislation and Initiatives**

Ms. Faustinos advised the Board that the full text of several bills was included in the materials; however several large files were not reproduced. She added that staff would provide copies on request.

##### **C. Project and Liaison Activities**

Ms. Faustinos commended Cathie Chavez, Conservancy staff member, for doing a tremendous job organizing and coordinating a home gardener's landscape workshop and the Bosque De Rio Hondo clean up event. She noted that the Department of Public Works provided the workshop facilities to the Conservancy at no charge and that approximately 50 people were in attendance over four Saturdays and that there were an incredible number of donations for the workshops.

Ms. Faustinos announced that the Conservancy has filled all three state position vacancies. She also indicated that the Conservancy was able to use the lay-off list from other state agencies to recruit two of the recent hires, Andrew Petrow and Alexandra Yu.

The organization chart was reviewed and two new staff members were introduced; Ray Delgado, assigned to urban projects and the Board Secretary, Valerie Thompson; who is a new state hire.

Ms. Faustinos further noted that office space at the Department of Public Works was not sufficient for the current staffing levels but that she is working on off site space to compensate. She concluded her report and advised the Board of the other attachments in the Board package.

Chair Colonna discussed the confirmation of Mike Chrisman, Resources Agency Secretary. Chair Colonna suggested visiting the offices in Sacramento to review the Conservancy's activities and asked that it be scheduled by the Executive Officer as soon as possible.

## **8. PRESENTATION ON THE STATUS OF LOS ANGELES RIVER MASTER PLAN AND COMPTON CREEK WATERSHED PLAN.**

Ms. Faustinos introduced two presentations, one on the Los Angeles River Master Plan, which had been adopted by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the second on the Compton Creek Watershed Plan. She introduced Maria Lopez, Los Angeles County Public Works Watershed Division.

Ms. Lopez began by giving some background on the Los Angeles River Master Plan. She noted that the Los Angeles River Master Plan was adopted in 1996, and she explained that it was developed in coordination with a wide range of stakeholders. She stated that there is an advisory committee that meets regularly to continue work on Master Plan implementation. She discussed the development of manuals which will provide signage and landscaping guidelines.

Ms. Faustinos confirmed that the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and the Watershed Conservation Authority are working with the Watershed Division on implementation of these plans. Further, she reminded the Board that these master plans may serve as the baseline for the Conservancy's Rivers and Tributaries Plan.

Ms. Madrid asked if there were gaps in that process for the Los Angeles River Master Plan. Ms. Faustinos stated that the master plan was developed several years ago and she further explained that through the continuing Advisory Committee input there was a dynamic process for updating plan elements. She stated that the City of Los Angeles was also undertaking a focused river planning effort.

Ms. Faustinos explained that the Compton Creek Watershed Plan was funded through Proposition 13. She reminded the Board that presentations were made last month on the Rio Hondo and Upper San Gabriel River Watershed plans were also funded by Proposition 13 through the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Ms. Faustinos introduced Rick Harter, Executive Director of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council and project manager for this plan.

Mr. Harter reported on the history of the planning effort and the composition of the stakeholder group which includes representation from the cities of: Los Angeles, Compton, Lynwood, and South Gate, Long Beach, Carson, and Huntington Park. Mr. Harter also discussed the scope of work, the potential for open space linkages, naturalizing stream corridors, and water quality improvements. He further discussed the City of Compton's plans to develop a regional garden park concept. He stated that he anticipated that the plan would all be completed by March 2005.

## **9. CONSENT CALENDAR**

- A. Consideration of resolution authorizing letters of support for Environmental Enhancement Mitigation Program grant applicants.**
- B. Consideration of resolution recommending that the Watershed Conservation Authority authorize procedures for the expenditure of funds.**

**Mr. Ruiz motioned to adopt Item number 9; Ms. Perry seconded the motion; unanimously passed.**

## **10. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION ADOPTING AN AMENDMENT TO THE RMC WORKPROGRAM TO ADD THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS: EAST LOS ANGELES CIVIC CENTER IMPROVEMENTS, HOLISTIC WATERSHED PLAN FOR EAST LOS ANGELES, LANGFORD WATERSHED PARK DEVELOPMENT, WHITTIER NARROWS LAKES AERATION AND WATER QUALITY ENHANCEMENT, LEGG LAKE ENHANCEMENTS IN WHITTIER NARROWS REGIONAL PARK LAKES ENHANCEMENT, SCHABARUM REGIONAL PARK STREAM ENHANCEMENTS, SANTA FE DAM RECREATIONAL AREA IMPROVEMENTS, PECK PARK LAKE IMPROVEMENTS, WESTSIDE PARK PLANNING AND IMPROVEMENTS.**

Ms. Faustinos explained that this item was for consideration of several projects for addition to the Workprogram. Ms. Faustinos gave a presentation on the East Los Angeles Civic Center Improvements, Holistic Watershed Plan for East Los Angeles, Langford Watershed Park Development, Whittier Narrows Lakes Aeration and Water Quality Enhancement, Legg Lake Enhancements in Whittier Narrows Regional Park, Rio Hondo Trail Access, Whittier Narrows Regional Park Lakes Enhancement, Schabarum Regional Park Stream Enhancements, Santa Fe Dam Recreational Area Improvements, Peck Park Lake Improvements, and the Westside Park Planning and Improvements projects.

She stated that the East Los Angeles Civic Center project has been underway since 1999 and that the project was being administered by Los Angeles County Public Works. Ms. Faustinos pointed out the location of the health center, court building, and a library and the connection to Belvedere Park. She stated that a great deal of the site design had been completed; however, the Conservancy staff thought that there were opportunities to improve the open space plaza element of the plan. She indicated that the Conservancy was proposing to add it to the workprogram and to provide funding for an open space element.

Ms. Faustinos also elaborated on the nomination of a holistic watershed plan for the East Los Angeles area, and portions of several Gateway cities. She explained that the area is a heavily impacted urban area that does not have significant open space. She further explained how the Conservancy would be using a "healthy" watershed approach and might specifically look at

opportunities for public lands that may be used as open space. She reported that this project may be incorporated in the Green Visions efforts with USC.

Ms. Faustinos described Langford Watershed project area. This land is owned by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District and has potential opportunities for improving open space. Ms. Faustinos noted that this project is located in the western border of RMC's territory in unincorporated East Los Angeles. She further explained that the Conservancy's territory went right up to the Los Angeles city limits in East Los Angeles.

Ms. Faustinos discussed the Whittier Narrows Lake Aeration Project. She stated that this was a project submitted to the Conservancy by Los Angeles County Parks. She indicated that this project would primarily address lake aeration improvements for water quality purposes.

Ms. Faustinos discussed the Legg Lake projects. She stated that it was a similar type of project, but in addition to water quality issue this project proposal includes a bank stabilization element.

Ms. Faustinos presented the Schabarum Park project. She noted that it was in the Puente Hills, and that it was a planning project to look at impact on the stream, and how the stream could be improved and the removal of excess concrete.

Ms. Faustinos noted that the Santa Fe Dam project was also submitted by Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation. She further noted that the project would be an opportunity to undertake lake refurbishments.

Additionally, Ms. Faustinos discussed the Peck Park Lake Improvements. She noted that these were improvements to the actual lake at Peck Park that currently have significant water quality issues that need to be addressed.

Finally, Ms. Faustinos discussed the Westside Park Planning and Improvements project. She explained that this was a project that is located in the City of Huntington Park which is to be a master plan.

Ms. Faustinos stated that this action recommended by staff would add the projects to the Workprogram for further staff evaluation. However, a few of these projects will be considered for funding later in this agenda.

The Board had a discussion regarding the Santa Fe Dam Project with regards to the removal of sand and other materials from Army Corps lands.

Ms. Deborah Chankin, representing Gateway Cities Council of Governments addressed the East Los Angeles Holistic Watershed Plan item. In reference to the study area, she stated that it appeared to be within the area that was previously described as being within the Compton Creek Watershed. Ms. Chankin requested that all cities included in the study be considered as a part of the plan, be specifically listed and that the name of the study is somewhat limiting given the geographic area.

Chair Colonna suggested modifying the work plan and noted that Ms. Chankin's comment was a point well taken and thanked her.

**Mr. Arrighi motioned to adopt the resolution; Mr. Ruiz seconded the motion; unanimously passed.**

- 11. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THAT THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY APPLY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM FUNDS FOR THE SANTA CLARA RIVER WILDLIFE CORRIDOR PROJECT.**

Item was tabled. No action was taken.

- 12. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A PLANNING GRANT TO THE AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC FOR EXPANSION OF EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AND FURTHER AUTHORIZING A CORRESPONDING REDUCTION IN THE GRANT AUTHORIZED TO THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY FOR WORKPROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.**

Ms. Faustinos stated that the Board heard a presentation by the Executive Director of the Aquarium of the Pacific regarding this project. Ms. Faustinos stated that she thought this project had tremendous merits and opportunities for the Conservancy's watershed. She also stated that she wanted to point out that she believed that this program was not just for the local area, but a benefit for the entire region. She mentioned that the fact that the Conservancy has an aquarium of this caliber in the southern California area was very significant.

Mr. Ruiz asked how other school districts could take advantage of it as well. Ms. Faustinos responded by stating that she understood that the aquarium serves many school districts outside of the immediate Long Beach area.

Mr. Schubal stated all or all but one of the gateway cities has annual attendance. He also stated that the number of school kids is increasing. He further stated that actually the schools that could not afford it were very important to them.

**Mr. Ruiz motioned to adopt the resolution; and Mr. Arrighi seconded the motion. Unanimously passed.**

- 13. CONSIDERTION OF RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT TO THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES FOR OPEN SPACE AND WATERSHED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE EAST LOS ANGELES CIVIC CENTER AND FURTHER AUTHORIZING A CORRESPONDING REDUCTION IN THE GRANT AUTHORIZED TO THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY FOR WORKPROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.**

In reference to the presentation slide, Ms. Faustinos noted the area where the Conservancy's funding was being recommended for expenditure. She stated that this would provide significant improvements to the open space element of the civic center plan. She pointed out that the open space plaza is associated with the civic center, and that it is one of the amenities that the Conservancy is hoping to enhance. She pointed out where the new parking lot would be located and stated that it would be a "grasscrete" parking lot.

She noted that another great opportunity that exists with the project is to provide education interpretation signage around the lake itself specifically as a educational venue for children to learn about fish ecology. She explained that the half million dollars that the Conservancy was

proposing for allocation to the project was to be used to bring enhancements to the plaza area of this facility. She also noted that there was tremendous use of this area by employees as well as the public and that a significant amount of people spent time at these government facilities. She stated that this was a very critical amenity that would reach a large number of people.

Chair Colonna asked if this was a new project. Ms. Faustinos explained that there was a new library being built and that the existing library would eventually be converted into a community service center. She explained that Belvedere Park was cut off totally from these administrative offices. She further explained that this new revitalization plan would tie in the civic center with the park. She stated that the park was undergoing a complete refurbishing, including features which would improve water quality in the lake, noting that those problems were all being addressed through the upgrade that was being done to the civic center along with planting new turf throughout the park. She also stated that with the new landscape plan, the entire civic center would be opened up so that it was integrated with the park.

Ms. Perry asked how these projects would fit within the project evaluation criteria. She also asked how the project fit in regards to prioritization. Ms. Faustinos explained how this project compared very favorably to other urban improvement projects and that the primary benefit of this project was the high level of urban open space objectives met by this site.

Ms. Madrid added that in the future she would also like to see new park space added to this area.

**Ms. Madrid motioned to adopt the resolution; Ms. Perry seconded the motion; passed unanimously.**

**14. CONSIDRATION OF RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT TO THE CITY OF HUNTINGTON PARK FOR PLANNING SERVICES RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT FEATURES TO WESTSIDE PARK AND FURTHER AUTHORIZING A CORRESPONDING REDUCTION IN THE GRANT AUTHORIZED TO THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY FOR WORKPROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.**

Ms. Faustinos explained that the grant was to request \$100,000 for planning of Westside Park in the City of Huntington Park. She stated that the City applied for funding for this site from Proposition 40, but a basic component of that grant application was to develop a sports facility on the site which was not consistent with the grant program or RMC goals.

She noted that staff has now worked with the City to develop a basic concept for including a natural open space element in the park, however in order to move to the next phase a grant is necessary for the planning element.

**Ms. Perry motioned to adopt the resolution; Mr. Arrighi seconded the motion; unanimously passed.**

**15. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT AMENDMENT TO THE CITY OF EL MONTE FOR RIO VISTA PARK AND FURTHER AUTHORIZING A CORRESPONDING REDUCTION IN THE GRANT AUTHORIZED TO THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY FOR WORKPROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.**

Ms. Faustinos presented a visual of the park plan. She stated that the City of El Monte had received a grant from Proposition 40 in order to commence with a park's improvement project at Rio Vista. She explained that once staff started meeting with the City and went on site with their contractor, Staff realized that there were several additional opportunities to enhance a park plan as specified in the staff report and that it was for that reason that the Conservancy was bringing forward a request to augment the budget by \$80,200. She further stated that it would enhance the features of the interface with Rio Hondo Tributary and create additional open space and planting. She stated that this would bring the total grant amount to \$375,200.

**Ms. Perry motioned to adopt the resolution; Mr. Ruiz seconded the motion; unanimously passed.**

16. **CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT TO THE CITY OF AZUSA FOR ACQUISITION OF THE COVELL (COOL SPRINGS) PARCEL(S) FOR THE AZUSA WILDERNESS PARK ALONG WITH A CORRESPONDING REDUCTION IN THE GRANT AUTHORIZED TO THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY FOR WORKPROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND FURTHER AUTHORIZING A REQUEST TO THE RESOURCES AGENCY TO AMEND THE PROPOSITION 13 GRANT FOR THIS PROJECT.**

Ms. Faustinos noted that this project area was also the subject of a grant from Resources Agency Proposition 13 funds. She noted that the grant included funding for acquisition of three ownerships including this site. However, given the cost of the Taylor site it was now anticipated that there are not sufficient funds remaining in the Proposition 13 grant to complete acquisition of the Integrated Financial Associates parcel(s). Therefore the City of Azusa has requested that the RMC consider approval of a grant in the amount of \$2,025,000 for the anticipated shortfall. She further noted that this project site is one of the only natural river areas along the San Gabriel River and recommended approval of the staff recommendation with the understanding that if the City was not able to negotiate an agreed upon purchase price for the property an amendment to the grant may be necessary.

**Ms. Perry motioned to adopt the resolution; Mr. Arrighi and Ms. Madrid seconded the motion; passed unanimously.**

17. **DISCUSSION OF STATUS OF DUCKFARM ACQUISITION AND CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THAT THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY AUTHORIZE ACTIONS THAT MAY BE NECESSARY FOR ACQUISITION OF THE WOODLAND DUCK FARM.**

This item was heard in closed session.

**Chair Colonna adjourned the meeting for closed session at 1:26 p.m.**

18. **CLOSED SESSION: PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTIONS 11126 (a) (1), 11126 (c) (7) (A), 11126 (e) (1) AND 11126.3 (a) THE BOARD MAY HOLD A CLOSED SESSION AT ANY TIME DURING THE MEETING TO DISCUSS AND TAKE POSSIBLE ACTION ON PERSONNEL MATTERS, RECEIVE ADVICE OF COUNSEL ON PENDING OR POTENTIAL LITIGATION, AND/OR GIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO NEGOTIATORS REGARDING ANY ITEM. MEMORANDA RELATED TO THESE ISSUES MAY BE CONSIDERED DURING SUCH CLOSED SESSION DISCUSSIONS.**



**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING PENDING LITIGATION: CITY OF INDUSTRY V. SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY.**

**Chair Colonna called the meeting to order at 2:57 p.m.**

**19. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING DATE**

Next meeting to be held on January 22, 2004, at Progress Park Plaza Auditorium, 15500 Downey Avenue, Paramount, CA 90723.

**20. ADJOURNMENT**

**Chair Colonna adjourned the meeting at 2:58p.m.**